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ABSTRACT

This paper describes work in progress on a multilingual, interactive, Web-based learning tool for writers, which is run collaboratively by staff from two Dutch universities. The site is part of a larger package that links the editing and word processing capabilities of Word and the communication and document exchange features of an e-learning platform like Blackboard to the comprehensive feedback categories of Alexis. The project provides process-oriented feedback during and after the writing process, improving cooperation between students to enable collaborative learning, allowing teachers and students to add their feedback to the Alexis grid, and combining all tools needed to write (e.g., dictionaries, style sheets, and online databases). This paper discusses project setup and describes genres and feedback options, such as an updated and integrated version of the Alexis program and a student-centered space structured by a series of assignments and cases intended to maximize student motivation. It also identifies various challenges in designing and developing the computer environment and discusses how these have been addressed. Data from student surveys and interviews indicated that half of the respondents had used the tool during their course assignments. Most were positive about their use of this tool and felt that the feedback improved their text. (Contains 11 references.) (SM)

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www.WorldWideWriting.com:
Developing a Multi-Lingual Process-Oriented Feedback Programme

During the past few years there has been a proliferation of CMC-inspired [Computer Mediated Courseware? afkorting even uitschrijven] tools intended to improve writing skills within an academic context. These have often focused on individual languages and a limited range of text-types, such as the business letter in English.
Although programmes and sites such as these have provided a wealth of information of use both to students and teachers/trainers alike, there are as yet few resources available that not only provide comprehensive details on a variety of languages and genres, but that also include a feedback facility for students and the means for them to critique each other's work in a computer environment.

This paper reports on work-in-progress on a multi-lingual project run jointly by staff from Nijmegen University and the University of Professional Education of Arnhem & Nijmegen to develop a process-oriented feedback programme for writing. It will discuss the set-up of the project, and the genres and feedback options within the programme, such as an updated and integrated version of the acclaimed Alexis programme and a student-centered space structured by a series of assignments and cases intended to maximise student motivation. It will also identify a number of the challenges faced by the Nijmegen-Arnhem team in their design and development of the computer environment, including a number of pedagogical issues, and it will detail some of the ways in which these have been addressed. The session will be run on an informal basis and the presenters will welcome audience participation, or indeed, feedback.

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www.WorldWideWriting.com:
Developing a Multi-Lingual Process-Oriented Feedback Programme *

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Introduction

The paper addresses the launch of a free, multilingual, interactive web-based learning tool for writers in tertiary and professional contexts on www.worldwidewriting.com. The site is part of a larger package that links the editing and word processing capabilities of Word, the communication and document exchange features of an e-learning platform like Blackboard (BB) to the comprehensive feedback categories of good-old Alexis (Jansen, Steehouder, Pilot, Schrauwen & Looijmans, 1986) that was revamped and is now available via the Web. The result is an on-line and off-line writing and feedback tool that:

- provides feedback during writing process and afterwards on both drafts and final products;
- improves co-operation between students to enable collaborative learning, independent of time and place;
- allows students/teachers to add their own feedback comments to the Alexis grid;
- combines all tools needed to write (dictionaries, on-line databases, style sheets, discourse models, cooperative learning platforms) in one easily accessible portal;

provides archives of earlier work and genre models.

In this paper, I would like to introduce our project on developing a multi-language programme for providing assistance to writers and markers of written texts, students and staff alike.

I will begin by outlining our point of departure as part of the Concourse project, aimed at developing an on-line academic writing centre in Europe on 5 languages. We will touch upon a brief explanation of Alexis, one of our principle marking tools, before moving into the rationale of the project. The results of a pilot study are used to show the type of usage students make of the free site.

Context

'Writing to Learn and Learning to Write' is a common phrase found at modern US universities in the 90s. As university funding depends among others on the number of university staff publications in accedited journals, many US universities developed so-called 'On-Line Writing' (OLW) centres of their own to assist students and staff in writing

* Paper presented at EuroCALL 2002, Jyvaskyla, August 2002

papers[†]. At the same time, OLW staff found that writing assists the organisation and development of thought, resulting in not only better-structured papers but also higher quality papers. In the light of the above, it is no surprise that the Writing Across the Curriculum and Critical Thinking movements have such large number of followers. An excellent introduction to the movements and the didactic implications is offered by Bean (1998).

The Dutch WorldWideWriting project is part of the on-line writing project called 'Concourse', sponsored by SURF in the Netherlands (www.surfbureau.nl) aimed at developing an on-line center of writing excellence operating on Commedia as a learning platform. Various languages and various universities are involved, each of which developing subsets of the overall project, such as the translation and upgrading of the Dutch Alexis feedback system.

Both an academic and vocational university in the Arnhem/Nijmegen region put in a bid to develop the feedback component to the Concourse. Three faculties are involved, each offering lecturers teaching languages and communication studies to develop the contents, didactics and design the format. The actual writing of the software was outsourced to Sevensteps (www.sevensteps.com). Although we investigated the EuroCALL database and internet resources to locate existing software we could team up with, none proved compatible to our ambitious project aim of upgrading Alexis and altering it for use in Windows. Magic Markin, Common Space and Home all have feedback features we desire, yet no program seemed satisfactory in view of our list of desirabilities on word processing ease, student/staff communication and versatile feedback.

In addition, the team of authors discovered they had to go beyond the initial boundaries of the Concourse project to include elements of project-based (language) learning. The resulting project nicknamed 'WWW' aims at providing a set-up to promote action learning, the trend among Dutch universities. As a result, E-learning platforms like BB but also Iliac, BSCW, Holo-E, Symatec and WebCT (which provide communicative tools for group-learning, group discussion, feedback modes and administrative facilities) needed to be included in WWW together with feedback. This combination would then enable usaage in project-based (language) learning contexts. Features from project-oriented and problem-oriented teaching methods were therefore included in the design (www.teleleerplatforms.nl). As many universities have begun to implement their academic courses on these e-platforms, it felt only natural to use the students' expertise in these platforms within the context of our project.

By incorporating these familiar E-learning features, and adding a text editor into an integrated environment we felt we could offer a valuable tool in teaching writing skills. Group work and collaborative learning, combined with integrated writing assistant and editing/marking features in five European languages form therefore the backbone of the project goals.

[†] For a collection, consult www.ammerlaan.demon.nl/WRITING.HTM

Arnhem and Nijmegen universities have opted for BB as a learning platform, and have begun to implement policies of offering all course material on BB. Since both universities involved have decided on BB as the main support tool, we felt it only natural to tie in WWW with these functionalities and the widespread use of Word in the Netherlands as a word processor.

In addition to the features above, WWW required extensive feedback facilities to further assist the writers in learning from their mistakes and omissions. A simple list of errors and the lecturer's suggestions for improvement was not enough. Although many programmes offer feedback of the type 'knowing the correct response', we felt that users would benefit more from 'elaborative feedback' (Buscemi, 1996). Eleborative feedback gives the user more information about their response, both complimentary as corrective. This feedback can be generic and universal as well as geared to the specific text under scrutiny. The type of feedback needed was intrinsic feedback, which goes beyond a simple 'correct/incorrect' to give the user feedback on the effect of his utterance on communication. Increasingly, language teachers agree that such intrinsic feedback ties in neatly with a constructivist learning approach (cf. Orellana, Suarez and Belloch, 2001). Research shows that elaborative intrinsic feedback is most useful to learners (Heift, 2001; Pujola, 2001) as well as the native-speaker users. Since feedback varies in quality, we felt users should have access to a large category of standard high-quality prefab feedback comments which they can use in Word. Ideally, feedback should be tailored to the specific genre the user currently writes, yet considering the range of genres such is difficult to achieve. We therefore opted for open-ended feedback; in addition to off-the-rack feedback comments we allow each user to generate his/her own feedback using the text editor in Word.
In addition, we felt that feedback during all stages in writing a text would be of more use than final evaluation of the final product. This process-based feedback (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~compose/tutor/pedagogy/process.html) would stimulate learners in developing successful strategies and tactics, and expanding on their existing skills in writing.

The result of our research lead to a software programme with amazing flexibility in terms of course aims, course books, course setting and learning and teaching strategies. The main features are given below. As most Dutch students and staff are familiar with Word, Internet and BB we have combined the best of each into WWW.

WWW in a nutshell
Our software design combines two aspects of writing: providing assistance during the construction process and providing feedback in collaborative context. Figure 1 illustrates the combined functionalities, ranging from an administrative tracker and extensive software help files to resources and feedback modules:

Figure 1. Chart of functionalities in WWW project implemented with Word, BB, Internet and the WWW upgrade of Alexis.

- Your office (space for writing and developing a personal portfolio) in Word

- Writing Market - Chatroom in BB

	- Discussion/newsgroup (the latest course-related gossip and developing theories) in BB - Digital magazine (for publication of successful assignments) on internet - Assignments given (lecturer-controlled courses) in BB - Archive (storing old assignments, exams and earlier drafts) in BB - Links to existing On-line Writing Labs OWL worldwide on internet
- Writing Assistant	- General information about writing processes and strategies (e.g. consider reader, consider structure, consider appeal, consider lay-out, consider medium) - Information on text genres (examples and features of e.g. business letter, paper, article, review, application letter, lit[erary] review, short report, thesis, dissertation) - Assistance (useful steps in writing, e.g. analysis, gathering information, building plans, writing a draft, evaluating by peer, collecting comments, revising, evaluating by lecturer)
- TextPert	- Evaluation tools for peer (e.g. contacting native speakers via Tandem or E-pals) using Alexis categories in BB - Evaluation tools with ready-made as well as new commenting specific to the task or to the students in Alexis categories - Evaluation practice (e.g. manual for providing constructive criticism, samples of reviewed texts)

The didactic design is such that students using WWW are encouraged to share and exchange information and writing products, and only have one site on which all relevant information on the drafting, writing and editing processes can be found. As the site is designed to be interactive, students are encouraged to add URLs of sites that provide useful background data, students are encouraged to add comments and rectify omissions, and students are encouraged to improve on the feedback comments for their own specific writing assignments.

Didactic usage

Several avenues are open to the student facing a writing assignment, depending on their learning style or instructions. Students who wish to start straightaway can use on-line dictionaries, thesauri, databases and other internet resources to collect and structure the information they need. These students, just like the step-by-step students who run through the entire site, can first submit their draft to fellow students for peer review, or when confident enough choose to hand it in/mail to their lecturer.

Other students and their peers may use checklists and references to examples in the Writing Assistant to guide and check their draft assignment. The various types of questions any author needs to address in order to communicate effectively and efficiently have been divided into seven groups. The checklists involve both general

questions on communicative good practice, as well as language specific issues. Questions are used here, such as:

- What aim do you wish to reach?
- What role do you adopt as a writer?
- How do you wish to be seen by your readers?
- What problems do you encounter in this assignment?
- What choices do you have?
- I feel like a high school child when I read your work: is that your intention?
- You are very vague about what you intend to say: is that your intention?
- Would it be possible to select another base structure here?
- Who is your reader in terms of the following dimensions? formal / informal
  distant / close

etc.

Feedback on the drafts and final products was drawn from the files of Alexis (Steehouder and Jansen, 1994). Various categories of comments are available, ranging from lay-out, reader-orientation, style, structure, grammar to spelling and punctuation. The issues in each category are always addressed in open questions like "Having read your paper I feel like you treat me as an expert. Is that your intention? Rather than state 'a mistake has occurred here' we felt that a positive encouraging approach would be more beneficial to self-learning and self-discovery of the students' writing skills. Naturally, students need not use these feedback categories initially, although pilots showed that the students tend to discover during their writing course that the comments given by their peers or lecturers on early drafts often involve issues mentioned in these lists.

Fundamental to our project is our desire to encourage students to collaborate and co-operate with one another during this stage of constructing a draft (http://tecfa.unige.ch/tecfa/research/CMC/colla/iccai95_1.html). By exchanging drafts via Chatrooms and Discussions, and by reviewing each other's work, students will collaborate in the process of writing their assignments. Research has shown this to be the most successful learning approach in the teaching of writing skills (Blaye, A., Light, P., Joiner, R., & Sheldon, S. 1991). Collaborative learning increases the quality of students' products and reduces teacher time. This is particularly the case when group products are revised several times first and compared to the quality criteria set beforehand.

As Figure 1 illustrated, we have included a time and place independent digital learning platform in which drafts can be exchanged to other students, comments can be added, and the reviewed drafts can be returned to their authors. Procedures are possible where, only after these peer comments have been processed, the final draft is submitted on-line to the lecturer for final marking. Administrative tracking enables the lecturer to determine whether the document submitted has been peer-reviewed already, and if not, reject it outright. The lecturer's comments are then used to write the final student product. This procedure of re-writing and peer-reviews has been successfully adopted in the teaching of writing skills by both universities over the years.

Marking with Alexis Textpert

The marking assistant in WWW is derived from Alexis, a DOS-based collection of various comments made on texts by Dutch lecturers in Communication Studies and Dutch. In the past, these lecturers found the flow of documents towards fellow students and towards lecturers needed to be streamlined, and the repetitive nature of feedback comments could be automated. Lack of time furthermore meant that most lecturers squiggle in the margin rather than provide detailed and in-depth comments. An acclaimed marking tool such as Alexis (Jansen, 1994) has provided Dutch lecturers with a range of ready-made feedback comments on texts. This feature of Alexis gives lecturers more time to provide detailed and more insightful comments on drafts.
Alexis is a Dos-based programme that allows users to mark texts using a large range of codes. Text fragments can be easily highlighted, and then provided with one of the codes from the many pull-down menus. This increases the level of detail and quality of feedback that is given on a draft. The contents of the codes become visible to the students when the reviewed document is returned, and each comment contains references to the course book 'Learning to Communicate' (Steehouder and Jansen, 1999). Thus a particular error is explained, an example given and crossreference is made to the book for the students to use.
The detail of Alexis' comment grids stimulates students in reviewing peer work in more detail than 'it is good' or 'it is bad'. Students were stimulated to go beyond feedback on grammar and spelling towards in-depth comments like the appropriate audience, reader-perspective and the aim of the text.

Alexis has a few drawbacks, however. First, the features of Alexis are restricted to the Dutch language only and to those lecturers using the course book 'Learning to Communicate'. We felt we had to desert the links to one course book and also expand to other languages frequently taught.
Second, we found that on further investigation, in addition to the fixed comments in Alexis formulated from a lecturer's perspective, students felt the need to be able to add new comments of their own which were specific to the review task at hand. Often such comments (and other teachers-comments) were useful and needed to be made available to others using the same software. The type of comments in Alexis needed to be adjusted to more student-based and constructive. For instance:

LINK WORD MISSING > Did you check whether necessary link words were used?

We thus have standard comments (but fewer than the original 900 in Alexis), novel comments added by students and teachers during actual usage, and assignment-specific comments added by each user, all of which can be given during the process of writing the draft, and on the final product. The functionality of adding comments to our database we felt would boost the interactivity, and hence attractiveness of the commenting feature (Wiggins, 1994).

Third, tailor-made comments specific to an exercise or assignment of a particular course were missing in the old Alexis structure. Piloting by Concourse colleagues in Utrecht showed that the possibility for students to add their own type of comments improved the interactivity of the software they used and increased students' motivation to use the software. This therefore was another functionality that needed to be added. Student

comments can be revealing for lecturers, often providing detailed feedback on the direction of the writing course. As we felt that commenting is the key feature to writing classes enabling students to learn easily, we put a lot of emphasis on this feature in designing our programming plans (Steehouder and Jansen, 1999).

Implementing WWW and its effects

Within the framework stated above, many choices needed to be made. Lively discussions amongst the authors dealt with a range of issues. Some of these are presented below, together with the choices we have made in WWW.

- What discourse genres do we offer assistance on? Investigation of literature and various existing On-Line Writing (OLW) sites (http://owl.english.purdue.edu) showed that defining genres in absolute terms is almost impossible. What to one is a personal letter, is to another an application letter. Some argue that business letters actually exists of many subtypes like 'enquiry, complaint, booking, acceptance, cancellation, reply to complaints, financial transfer'. Furthermore, we found that the standards offered in the literature only convey an illusion: there are no clear-cut perfect resumes acceptable to any type of reader in any context. We also found we could differentiate in so many levels, and in many languages needed to take cultural peculiarities into account (e.g. UK, Aus., USA, Indian English openings). Therefore an executive decision was taken to concentrate on the following genres in all 5 languages:
- writing emails
- writing an application letter
- writing a resume
- writing a journal article
- writing a letter of enquiry
- writing a business report
- writing a short thesis.

In addition, due care would be given to state openly that our suggestions were no more than that, and should merely be seen as stimulating the students in finding out more about their target audience. The genres selected were used in pilots to trial the WWW prototype.

- How dependent is the software? Whereas some argued the software should tie in to existing book-based courses, others stated it had to be totally independent, with an open structure to allow any lecturers or students to fit it to their needs.
We discovered in the literature that experts do not agree much on research into the actual process of writing, except for the fact that writers differ in their approach (http://www.readingonline.org/articles/writing). To the writing task Terms like Mozart-writers with bright ideas and little structure versus Beethoven-writers with close adherence to structure but little imagination abound, both resulting in quite feasible products but using different routes (Wing, 1991). Possibly these insights could be used to match students with opposite styles to one another in an assignment to maxmise the learning effect for each other.

In this sense, students can enter the programme at any level, from any direction, and are free to gather the info as they require. The latter option involves more maintenance

and service activities, but the former would mean the users would be forced into a limited number of straightjacket courses. We decided to offer students/users a choice to either way. Those who feel comfortable in sticking to a flow chart of questions could use WWW, and those who merely wish to see an example of a genre type could do the same, and those wishing to learn more about writing processes could also use the general tools.
The software is to be flexible in the sense of point of entry and also the level of language proficiency and assignment type. Since various faculties are involved, with students whose proficiency ranges from beginner up to near native, feedback and assistance should cover various angles. Thus feedback to beginners can be provided in their native tongue as well as the L2, whereas feedback to advanced learners can be in the L2 only.

- What type of commenting do we provide? Alexis itself offers a myriad of comments, not all of which were needed by learners of second or foreign languages. Some argued that severely reducing the number of communicative comment categories, and increasing the number of language (grammar, spelling, vocabulary) categories would better cater to the needs of the students and lecturers involved. As a result of this discussion, pruning took place in some general categories, leaving the main communicative categories in tact for native-speaker level feedback. More language-specific categories are added to assist language learners at grass root level.
In addition, the tone of the comments was altered: rather than adopt a superior tone, we adjusted the comments in such a way that the feedback was positive and constructive. Instead of 'you forgot...' we now say 'Did you consider the following..'
In addition, the quality of feedback is adjusted to the level and course aim of the students: some (e.g beginner) students will receive far more 'local' feedback on the language as such (e.g. tense errors, declension, spelling mistakes) whereas at a different stage (advanced) students can receive feedback on a more 'global' level (e.g. tactic, strategy, style). We felt that the type of feedback need not depend on level of proficiency as well: beginners could also aim for communicative targets and perspective whilst ignoring correctness for a moment, depending on the assignment offered. Providing a assistance for learning to write rather than for language learning is the goal of the WWW project.

- To what extent is the user guided? Discussion amongst the authors was lively on the issue of student guidance: leaving students free to roam around could be desirable for advanced level students, but daunting for intermediate level students and beginners. One could imagine the latter groups required a more step-by-step approach in designing and writing their texts. We opted for one general portal, opening up into each language page where students are offered the Writing Assistant for a step-by-step approach to an assignment, as well as access to online samples of various genres.

- How can we make it irresistible? Any programme stands or falls by how the end-users employ it. Experience gathered from other writing tools shows the students and lecturers must consider the tool useful, easy to navigate, accessible and 'time-saving' in order to use it. How can we achieve this attractiveness? Do we force students to use it, asking

for copies of their checklists as they develop their draft, or do we adopt a 'laissez faire' approach?

We chose to keep our students as active as possible by using open-ended questions rather than tick-boxes, offering incentive-comments at various levels, and providing the feeling of being watched by both peers and lecturers involved. From the beginning, students are encouraged to formulate the end criteria for themselves, and continually compare their products to these criteria.

Implementation strategies
WWW was first set up in three pilot courses at the University of Nijmegen. Three courses were re-designed to include instruction sessions for BB, instruction for WWW Usage and example cases. The goals of all three courses was to improve writing skills (two in Dutch, one in English) in learners of Dutch. Students were advanced students of their language (2nd year) or native speakers (in case of Dutch) at the University of Nijmegen. In each course, assignments were set both aimed at activitating the students in understanding the WWW tools and designing drafts and blueprints prior to writing their texts. Student groups were divided into writing teams who were encouraged to help one another in completing the assignments. Communication needed to take place electronically among members of the writing team. Weekly Chat sessions were organised during which members of each team were on line and could exchange comments and suggestions on drafts placed in the team's own BB Forum.

From February till April 2002 three pilots were run involving the use of WWW.
The pilot students were asked in questionnaires at the end of each course (prior to exams) to asses the training they had had. Individuals were randomly picked from the student groups and interviewed in depth on the use and usage of WWW. The comments given were also analyzed in Word (custom), in Textpert (ready-made) and in BB Chat (in team sessions).

Pilot results
The texts produced the assignments were different from the previous year results. Although differences in student population (such as level of prior education) may influence these results, the feeling among lecturers was that the level of texts submitted was better as far as spelling, grammar, structure, layout and overall content was concerned. Although this effect could be due to these lecturers not having been exposed earlier drafts as in previous years, students also commented on marked improvement in their skills.

The interviews and questionnaires were analyzed, and the results are given below.
Overall, half the students had actually used WWW in doing their course assignments. All students used BB to discuss the assignments, ask questions, review strategies and comment on solutions.
Most students used the Dutch pages, despite their course goal. On the whole, students were positive towards the use of BB and WWW in their course work.
WWW startup instructions were provided, though most students indicated they would not need it. In the evaluation afterwards, however, students indicated they had needed more examples and more cases for practising this software than they had been given. BB proved clear and easy to use, although the use of Forum for exchanging drafts was complicated for some. Fortunately, each writing team managed to solve these issues themselves during the course.

- What did they use? As far as WWW was concerned, 89% used WWW market, 25% used the Writing Assistant, 30% used Textpert and 10% used the Genre examples and

3% Support helpfiles. Remarkable that some students did not use the tools available to them even though these were part of the course.

- How was WWW used? The analyses revealed that 45% of the students used Textpert as a reference tool ("I used it to find out what is meant by Layout", "I wanted to find the rule governing 's"); 65% for feedback on early drafts; 75% used WWW off line on their home PC.

- What did students think of the feedback comments on the drafts? Students reported that Textpert comments proved easy to find and easy to add to the drafts in Word. They also stated that the pre-fab feedback comments in Textpert sometimes contained "complex sentences in English", which they had to consult the lecturer for. A number of students also stated they did not like the absence of detail in each comment to the specific assignment for each course ("the comment applied to lots of cases, and I was forced to think through how it applied to my own draft").

- What was the effect of the feedback comments given on the texts? Students reported that commenting in Word (using the editor) was 'fun' (30%) and 'efficient' (40%). Others did not express any opinion on this part of WWW. Adding ready-made comments in TextPert was considered 'fun' (25%) and 'efficient' (50%). The use of commenting via BB Chat was 'fun' (80%) and 'efficient' (90%), suggestion that 'live' online and instantaneous feedback was favoured most.

Analyses of the language employed in comments showed that the Chat sessions involved more informal language use than the WWW site used. The language used also differed in nature from the comments provided by other tools in WWW. The frequency of the nature of comments varied per medium: from most frequent to less frequent the top three is as follows:

WORD:	language; structure; contents
TEXTPERT:	language; structure
BB Chat:	[contents; structure; language.]

In sum, the comments provided during and after the pilot sessions were encouraging. Students did use WWW tools in their assignment, and did find the all impression given:
- using WWW improved the level of student texts remarkably;
- using WWW involves more effort and time from the students;
- feedback is used by students in improving their texts;
- co-operation among writing teams is felt to be less as a result of computer-usage;
- oral comments remain preferred to receiving written comments.

Summary

WWW proved to be an ambitious partner to Alexis. As time is becoming a rare commodity, priorities were set in order to pilot the software. We have decided to first instruct a number of lecturers in BB, internet links and the software. The Alexis feedback boxes are now being edited, and sample discourse material as well as a relevant

internet links are being added. To improve availability of the links, the material is mirrored on various servers.

To sum up, our WWW project offers the following characteristics of a writing assistant and editor:

- it is both product/process-oriented
- it is not simply English or Dutch but offers 5 languages
- it does not only provide feedback afterwards but also during the actual writing
- it offers feedback not merely on local language features (grammar, spelling) but also global features (like roles, goals, style, argumentation, lay-out)
- it does not simply provide pre-cooked standard comments but offers options to add more feedback categories or simply highlighted text for the student to figure out what is wrong.
- it enables both purely lecturer-feedback and also peer-reviews so that students and lecturers can use and learn from one another's feedback
- it has an open structure to cater for students with varying writing styles (e.g. Mozart versus Beethoven style)
- it has a structure that is not normative nor linear only but allows entry from multiple angles.
- it allows students to control their own learning path as well as offering the facility to run a completely teacher-guided course
- it didactics are not stepwise but strategy-based
- conceptually it is based on various models of writing
- it offers feedback on primary, secondary and tertiary levels of language proficiency.

Although the WWW software is different in nature from existing OLW sites, we feel that the writing sites can compliment one another rather than compete. Students who are product-oriented and "just want to see the right thing only" can still use the more traditional OLW sites or the library resources. Students who feel they need to acquire useful strategies which apply beyond a specific writing assignment can use WWW as a course environment in which they develop a stepwise approach to writing. As such, the WWW software fits in well within the CALL trend of using simple multi-prpose programms that allow learners many different uses. WWW also goes beyond the functionality of a book by integrating internet resourses, library references with text and lecturer specific comments aimed at acquiring writing skills. Further research is to be carried out into the effects of the site and the use made by its users, particularly in the context of project-based learning.

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